

TO: APPROPRIATIONS COMMITTEE

FROM: CHRISTOPHER J. LINDQUIST
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

RE: WRITTEN TESTIMONY ON BEHALF OF THE CONNECTICUT STATE
LIBRARY (H.B. NO. 5037)

DATE: FEBRUARY 17, 2022

Dear Senator Osten, Representative Walker and Appropriations Committee members:

I am writing in support of Governor Lamont's budget allocation for the Connecticut State Library. I am pleased the budget maintains funding for the services of the programs and services of the State Library and expands access to Braille library materials. I am especially pleased that the proposed changes to the State Library's budget will not impact the State's Federal Funds from the Institute of Museum & Library Services (IMLS).

The Farmington Libraries work collaboratively with the CT State Library as well as our colleagues at the Connecticut Library Consortium (CLC) in order to deliver library and information services to people of all ages and interests in our local community.

As I am sure you are well-aware, Connecticut's 192 public libraries serve an increasingly diverse population of state residents who rely on the services our libraries provide to meet their educational, informational, cultural and recreational needs. The staff at the CT State Library, including those in the Division of Library Development, are critically important in developing and maintaining the quality and quantity of resources available at libraries of all types, including public libraries, school libraries, academic and special libraries throughout the state.

The services supported by the State Library below are just a few of the essential statewide services that the Farmington Libraries and all libraries depend on in order to serve the needs of our patrons:

- The **ResearchIT CT** collection of research databases provides rich resources for the general public and students of all ages.
- The **BorrowIT CT** program allows us to serve non-residents and for our residents to use other public libraries in the state and reimburses us for those services.

- The **DeliverIT CT** program delivers materials from libraries across the state to the residents of Farmington and deliver materials in our collections to the residents of other towns across the state.

Due to the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, libraries have experienced a sea change that will profoundly transform the way we serve the needs of local and state residents in the future. Even though there were times in the past twenty-three months when libraries across the state were not able to be fully open to the public due to the severity of the pandemic, my library colleagues and I quickly pivoted to meeting the needs of library patrons in non-traditional ways, including curbside pickup, grab-and-go services and online programs that continued to engage children, teens and adults and kept them connected to their communities. Electronic usage skyrocketed as more and more people discovered the wide array of electronic books and magazines, audios, videos and online databases that are available 24/7 through library websites, as well as the eResources provided by the State Library and CLC. I anticipate that we will continue to rely on federal and state support in the future in order to expand access to all those in our communities, a large percentage of whom still lack basic Internet connectivity needed to access these resources or the technology and information literacy skills to use them.

Using Federal ARPA funds, with assistance from the State Library, the Farmington Libraries recently purchased a Laptops Anytime Kiosk that will allow patrons to borrow laptops for use outside the Libraries in order to search for employment, do homework, connect to friends and family and discover online resources that will help them succeed in their personal and professional lives.

The pandemic has created both challenges and opportunities. For the good of all those who will continue to depend on their local public library to help serve their educational, informational, cultural and recreational needs in a post-pandemic world, I urge your support of the Governor's budget for the CT State Library.

Thank you for your continued support of the CT State Library and libraries throughout our great state.